

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01

ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 DRC-01 /149 W

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FM USINT DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 276

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0328

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IZ

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SYRIAN ASSISTANCE TO IRAQ

1. ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE USINT SOURCE, DEPUTY COMMANDER AND CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE SYRIAN AIR FORCE, BIRG. MAHMUD AZZAM, PROCEEDED TO BAGHDAD ON MARCH 30 WHERE HE WAS TO TELL THE IRAQI REGIME THAT (A) SYRIA HOPED IRAQ COULD SETTLE THE KURDISH PROBLEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE SYRIAN BELIEF THAT THE ARABS MUST PRESENT A UNITED FRONT AGAINST ISRAEL AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT AND (B) THE SYRIAN AIR FORCE WOULD BE AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT IF THE LATTER BELIEVES IT WOULD BE HELPFUL.

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2. ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE, MANY IN THE

SYRIAN REGIME BELIEVE THAT "IMPERIALIST POWERS"
ARE BEHIND IRAQ'S TROUBLES WITH THE KURDS
IN ORDER TO DIVIDE THE ARABS AND THEREBY BRING
PRESSURE TO BEAR ON SYRIA TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING
IN THE SYRIAN/ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT TALKS.

3. COMMENT: I HAVE HEARD SIMILAR RUMORS AS EXPRESSED
IN PARA 2 FROM MANY SYRIANS AS WELL AS ARAB DIPLOMATS
WITH THE US BEING SEPCIFICALLY MENTIONED BY SOME.
IN ANY EVENT, I WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE SYRIAN
REGIME IS GENUINELY CONCERNED ABOUT IRAQ'S KURDISH
PROBLEM AND MAY WELL HAVE OFFERED SOME ASSISTANCE
IN VIEW OF IRAQI AID DURING AND AFTER THE OCTOBER
WAR AND PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE POSSIBILITY OF
FURTHER SYRIAN NEEDS IN THE FUTURE. MOREOVER, AS
GOOD ARAB NATIONALISTS THE ASAD REGIME HAS AN
IDEOLOGICAL REASON FOR BEING HELPFUL. FINALLY,
THERE IS ALSO A DIRECT SYRIAN INTEREST IN THE
ACTIVITIES OF THE IRAQI KURDISH MINORITY AND IN
THE IMPACT OF THOSE ACTIVITIES ON THE ALBEIT SMALL
BUT STRATEGICALLY LOCATED SYRIAN KURDISH MINORITY LIVING
IN THE FAR NORTHEASTERN REGION OF THE COUNTRY.
SCOTES

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